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## **PRESCRIBED FIRE PLANNED THIS WEEKEND**

### **Part Two, Take One**

Fire officials from the Salt Lake Field Office, BLM and academia representing BYU and USU were very excited about the results of a 75-acre sagebrush burn implemented yesterday. Fortunately it looks like the weather will remain favorable to complete part 2 of this long-term research program exploring ways to improve the health of sagebrush rangelands across the Great Basin. The second site is 1000-acres of Utah juniper, located between the towns of Rush Valley and Vernon in Tooele County. The burn will take place on Saturday and Sunday, September 30-October 1, 2006, weather permitting.

According to Kristine Kuarnberg, proprietor of The Silver Sage in Vernon, impact to local residents was low. Kuarnberg reports, "The only person who said anything was my daughter who called me on her way home to ask me if I knew anything about the smoke close to my father's place." When Kuarnberg was informed about the juniper burn this weekend she said her father is, "really excited about this one, the juniper has just taken over up there."

The two prescribed fires are part of a large scale scope across the Great Basin region called Sage STEP (Sagebrush Steppe Treatment Evaluation Project). Healthy sagebrush steppe communities in the Great Basin are rapidly disappearing due to invasion of non-native plants, catastrophic wildfires, and encroachment of pinyon-juniper woodlands. SageSTEP is a 5-year to 10-year study that will explore ways to restore sagebrush communities. The project is fully interdisciplinary, with ecological, economic, and social components evaluated.

For more information check out [www.sagestep.org](http://www.sagestep.org) or [www.ut.blm.gov](http://www.ut.blm.gov)

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